

## **Day by the Buffalo**

### **PIONEER HISTORY/OZARK CULTURE – Boxley Mill**

Participants will learn why Boxley Mill was a working mill long after parts of the country had closed down their mills.

#### **Teacher Background**

Before the days of paved roads large rivers were used to transport people and supplies. In the Ozark Mnts. the rivers are small and shallow. Not big enough for big boats hauling supplies like food.

Pioneers in the 1800s arrived to the Ozarks riding in wagons along bumpy, windy roads. Travel was difficult. People had to provide for themselves. How were they to do this? The early settlers planted corn and wheat for making meal and bread. Who would grind their corn into meal? Who would grind wheat into flour? The community needed a mill. In 1870 a tall and very big mill was built in Boxley Valley.

Mills, such as the Boxley Mill, were a common sight before the days of grocery stores on every other corner. Farmers that grew corn and wheat needed to get their harvest to a mill for grinding. The farmer would pitch fork the field of wheat into a wagon, hitch horses or mules to the wagon then haul the load to the mill. Corn would be husked and carried in a bag to the mill then ground. Back at the house the meal would be made into corn cakes, cornbread, and grits and the wheat would become bread. The finished product became an ingredient to sustain the farmer and his family.

The mill was powered not by electricity but by the power of water. Rain water was needed to turn the wheel that was attached to the grinding stone. It was this same rain that the farmer depended on for nourishing his crops.

The mill also provided the community with a meeting place. At the mill the farmer gathered his flour or meal and would gather the latest news about the community. It was a bond that held the community together and it was the remoteness that supported the mill until the 1950's when the miller shut the mill down as folks began to travel to the larger cities and buy their supplies.

Today, the National Park Service protects and preserves the Boxley Mill as a special place of days gone by.

# CLASSROOM: PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

## Activity 1 The Old Mill in the Valley: A Gathering Place

### Arkansas State Standards

#### Social Studies Strand 2: *People, Places and Environments*

##### Standard 1:

*Students will demonstrate an understanding that people, cultures, and systems are connected and that commonalities and diversities exist among them.*

**PPE.1.1** *Investigate how members of a family, school, community, state, nation and culture depend on each other.*

**PPE.1.3** *Analyze the contributions of various groups to community*

**PPE.1.5** *Analyze the effects of interactions between people and their environment*

**PPE.1.6** *Distinguish similarities and differences among families and communities around the world.*

### OBJECTIVES

Student will be able to

1. Locate AR on the US map
2. Locate Ozark Mts on AR map
3. Locate large rivers relative to Ozark region
4. Explain how and what obstacles slowed the growth of the Ozarks compared to growth along larger rivers
5. Explain why the Ozark region remained isolated for so long

### MATERIALS

- Map of the US and highlighted major rivers
- Map of AR showing regions including Ozarks

### ACTIVITY

1. Have students look at a map of the US and the mid-west in particular and locate the large cities. Using the AR map do the same.
2. Why did these large cities develop where they are?
3. Locate the large rivers noticing that the large cities tend to be on rivers
4. Have students distinguish the geographic boundaries of the Ozark region relative to the AR River Valley, the Ouachita Mts., and the Mississippi Delta
5. Discuss whether or not the larger cities had access to the newest and latest things.
6. Ask, in what way(s) would living in the Ozarks be different than living in the Mississippi Delta?

## **ACTIVITY 2**

1. Have the students prepare for their trip by researching mills. What do they think when they hear the word “mill”? Is it a type of factory? Do many people work there?
2. Share pictures of mills from books. Discuss the different types of mills
3. Ask students whether they think the mill in Boxley Valley was more or less important in 1900 than in 2010.
4. Do students think the mill is important enough for the National park Service to take care of?
5. Have students brainstorm ways that mills affect communities.

## **CLASSROOM: POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES**

### **Arkansas State Standards**

#### **Social Studies Strand**

##### **Stand 1: Time, Continuity, and Change**

##### **Standard 1:**

Students will demonstrate an understand of the chronology and concepts of history and identify and explain historical relationships

**TCC:1.4** Describe how history is a continuing story of events, people and places

##### **Standard 2:**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of how ideas, events and conditions bring about change.

**TCC.2.1** Discuss and record changes in one’s self, community, state and nation

**TCC.2.2** Illustrate that change is inevitable and universal and affects everyone

## **ACTIVITY 1 “The Old Mill in the Valley: A Gathering Place”**

### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able to

- Explain the lasting importance of a building even when the building is no longer being used
- State another value of a place besides monetary value

### **MATERIALS**

- Copy of “The Old Mill in the Valley: A look back through the eyes of a child”

## **ACTIVITY**

1. Read story to students while they sit quietly and eyes closed. Story is included in handbook.
2. Ask students if they would have been able to do as the child did? Would they have enjoyed taking the grain to the mill?
3. Why was the mill important to the people of the valley?
4. Why do you think it is important to take care of buildings like the mill?
5. Ask student if they have something special they take care of. It could be a basketball, a garden, a pet, a bicycle, rollerblades, etc. How do they protect and take care of their special thing or place?
6. Is there an important building in your town? Why is it important? Do you know who takes care of it?
7. Ask student if they think it is important to protect places like the Boxley Mill.
8. What can you do to take care of special places like Buffalo National River and Boxley Mill?
9. Why do you think it is important today to take care of the past?

### **“The Old Mill in the Valley: A look back through the eyes of a child”**

**As soon as I was big enough to sit on a horse it became my job to go to the mill. The bag of corn was sometimes too heavy for me to lift onto the horse so someone big would tie the bag onto the horse's saddle and away I would go, looking forward to the time spent at the mill.**

**Reaching the mill I would find a stump or stairs to bring the horse along beside of the then ease off and finally down to the ground. Out of the mill would come the miller. He would off load the bag and proceed to place the bag in line with all the other bags as first come first served was the rule. A mix-up or confusion over bags would not occur as labels with family initials would identify each bag.**

**Waiting my turn at the mill would mean time for a swim in the creek and plenty of time to find bugs to play with. (So- the longer the line of bags the better!)**

**While I would play, the toll of 1/8 of the corn would be separated by the miller and the rest of the corn would be poured into the hopper. The machine would begin to whirl, twirl, grind, sift and after about an hour or so the mill finally produced cornmeal. Since the miller took his share, no money had to be exchanged. This made the miller happy and**

**everyone back at the house happy because they knew that cornbread would be eaten 3 times a day.**

**It was really exciting to go the mill in the summer with a wagon load of corn. The roads were steep and rough so father would use a strong team of mules to pull the wagon. We would tie a tree to the back of the wagon to keep the wagon from running over the mules.**

**For more than 80 years the mill nourished the valley and provided a gathering place.**

**The tall, proud mill in the valley sites quiet now. Yet, I can still hear the whirling, the twirling, the grinding and the sifting.**

### **Key Words**

**Barrel, belt, bin, community, desk, drive shaft, grinding, hopper, mill, miller, millpond, millstone, National Park Service, Ozarks, pioneers, raceway, swans, toll, turbine, wetlands**

## **ACTIVITY 2**

### **OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able:

- to express themselves artistically
- draw on their memory

### **MATERIALS**

- 10ft sheet of banner width paper
- Magic markers
- crayons
- pencils

### **ACTIVITY**

1. Have students create a wall banner for class room by drawing mill, surrounding area and people
2. Label drawing using words that are posted
3. Express their thoughts by writing down their feelings on the banner.